

John Mahar
Narrator

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Hoosick Falls Historical Society Interviewer

Interviewed on December 28th, 1999
Hoosick Falls Historical Society
Hoosick Falls, New York

Q: Please state your name

A: John [unclear] Mahar

Q: Where do you live?

A: 33 river road Hoosick falls New York

Q: Ok, did you live in Hoosick falls all your life?

A: Yes, I have

Q: Ok, now, would you tell us a little before, uh, about you before you went into the service?

A: Before I went into the service I graduated from St. Mary's academy and then I went to work well I was still in high school I went to work at the old Lamire Demarco's (?) which has long since been out of business down on church street in Hoosick falls. Stat clerk and then a cashier, and then from there I went into the service.

Q: I see, where you drafted or listed?

A: I was drafted

Q: Alright, and what happened?

A: 1951 I believe

Q: 1951, alright the war broke out in June of '50 if I remember right

A: Yep and then I took my basic training at fort Devens, Massachusetts. I was there for 18 weeks of basic training and from there I got shipped to fort drum in New York and I was there for 3 months, and from there I was shipped overseas over to Korea.

Q: I see what were you in, the army or?

A: I was in the infantry

Q: Army infantry, I see.

A: 24th division: 19th regiment of the 24th infantry in Korea

Q: Ok and when you got to Korea where did they put you in the...?

A: I was right up front; I was a linesman.

Q: I see.

A: I was in the mortar section.

Q: And ah, I've read about you know I've gone through it carefully; the Korean battle you know and they moved up fast north

A: Well I was in, I was in quite a few battles, First day that I was there I recall they jumped off and attacked where I was shipped to, and we had 26 men were injured of the company I was with; on the very first day.

Q: How many men in a company? You know I've always wondered about ?

A: Oh, I forget

Q: Oh, no I, I've been reading people you know I can't...

A: Well in a squad there is 9

Q: 9 in a squad?

A: And I think there's four squads to a....

Q: Well it's not important. Alright so then you were.

A: And I was there for 4 months and I got rotated from there, then they put down anyone that had 20 points would be rotated, we were being replaced by the I remember the 40th division I remember the California national guard replaced us in Korea and I got shipped to Japan.

Q: Alright but you spent 4 months in Korea?

A: 4 months

Q: And how far up did you go, the 38th parallel or?

A: I was in 3-4 battles I can't recall where they were

Q: Ok

A: I was right up there and I was lucky, and I think I was telling you one day I had a fella in the fox hole with me I'll never forget him, his name was Jetter (?) he was a colored fella and he wasn't fit for combat, he really wasn't so I called the first sergeant in and I said you got to get this guys out of here or he'll drive you crazy too. Eventually he transferred him to somebody else and god is my judge, he got up one day and he thought heard the Chinese coming and he pulled open a hand grenade and he dropped it in the hole and it blew this guy, this other guys leg off he died on the way to care, and I thought; that could have been me.

Q: Yep, alright so you did your four months in the battle and then you came back

A: Then I came to Japan.

Q: Alright

A: And then another 4 months and then Japan and then so.

Q: How long did you spend?

A: Then in Japan I was 5 months in Japan and we got to Japan and they volunteered us, this is a strange situation they volunteered us for cooks they wouldn't take anyone that hadn't had some combat and I had already had combat, I didn't volunteer they picked me out and said you're going to cook in baker school so I cooked in baker school and cooked for the last 3 months in Japan

Q: I see

A: Cause they knew that in 4 months I was going to get discharged

Q: Yea right

A: And they didn't want to put a new guy that hadn't seen any combat where they would take somebody away from the area so.

Q: I see, so then you went to cook school then you were cooking in the...

A: Yep I went to Iwo Jima (?), southern Japan they sent me to cook in cooking school down there and then I come back and I cooked in Japan until I got discharged.

Q: Alright, where did you get discharged from?

A: I got discharged Camp Kilmer, New Jersey

Q: I see, alright.

A: When I used to go, when I first went in the service I, me and Andrew kip another fella from Hoosick falls used to ride the train together he was wounded and he was in the hospital. I think it was in Waltham (?).

Q: He was, you're right cause he, ...?

A: We used to ride the train together back every Sunday night

Q: I see

A: Of course at that time I didn't drive, I didn't even have a driver's license

Q: Huh, I see, alright so you came home?

A: I came home and I went to work for a fella Walt Warren right where the Eagles is now on First Street. He had a market and I was a meat cutter there and I

worked there for 3 or 4 years and then I went and worked for the grand union as a meat cutter then I went with Ray Holbubage (?), you probably remember him..

Q: Yes.

A: He had a market, the Delianar (?) Market I worked for him after, right after walt died and then I left there and went over to rays oh, probably 8-10 years then when he died I went and worked for the village, I had 25 years at the village.

Q: Yea, right, didn't you get into politics or something?

A: Yes, yes I was a town justice for 12 years.

Q: I see.

A: My wife was a counsel women for 12 years in town.

Q: I see, alright you're retired now?

A: Yes I am, I am retired.

Q: I see, alright is there anything you'd like to say about Hoosick falls service, I mean we made a quick one here it's a really quick we got your story?

A: I'm very proud of what you are doing for the veterans because nobody has never really done nothing for the grand veterans that I know of.

Q: Yea, do you know; I'm trying to get a list of guys, they never made lists for Korea or Vietnam, they made lists for WW2. Yea but what would like to know is who else do you know that went to the Korea war?

A: Jimmy O'Neil,

Q: They're gone, Jimmy O'Neil is gone?

A: Alagadree (?), he's deceased now too he just died of natural causes, I don't know what happened to him, and like I said Paul Catro (?) but he shipped out he went to Germany and Eddie Malahee (?) he went to Germany.

Q: Eddy Melahee went?

A: He went to Germany.

Q: Yea but that's alright he was in the Korean war he was in the service during Korea?

A: Yes, yes he was.

Q: Well I'll have to call him and ask him if he'll come.

A: Yea because he trained I believe in camp, no Louisiana Indian town gap wasn't it in Pennsylvania.

Q: Yea Pennsylvania.

A: He got shipped to Germany.

Q: Well ok, so I thank you and if you got anything to say about Hoosick falls or anything?

A: Well it's a great little town, it's a great town; I think it is.

Q: I agree.

A: Its nothing like the city I wouldn't want to live in the city.

Q: Ok well we thank you very much for doing.